




Speech by
Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Tuesday, 10 May 2011

FORTITUDE VALLEY DRINK-SAFE PRECINCT

 **Ms GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (11.57 am): In mid-April 2011 Deputy Premier Paul Lucas released the statistics on the first three months of the operation of the Fortitude Valley drink-safe precinct. This is a great, well-funded program under the Bligh government's drink-safe precinct—DSP—trial over two years in the area. The two-year drink-safe precinct trial forms part of the Bligh government's response to the recommendations of the bipartisan Law, Justice and Safety Committee's inquiry into alcohol related violence, ably chaired by the member for Springwood.

Fortitude Valley is one of Brisbane's busiest entertainment precincts and it is the perfect candidate, along with Surfers Paradise and Townsville, for the DSP trial, as it is a well-renowned and highly popular entertainment precinct among locals and tourists alike. Some of the 75 licensed venues in the Valley offer world-class entertainment facilities. The Valley DSP includes most of the late-night trading area, where it is estimated that on an average weekend night approximately 50,000 patrons frequent it, with just over 5,000 residents living in the suburb. Drink-safe precincts are about fostering safe environments where party goers can have a good time without the risk of alcohol or drug related violence or antisocial behaviour. The DSP trial is about a holistic management plan involving the government, the council, business and community organisations and stakeholders coming together to ensure that the precinct is safer, with well-coordinated services so that their patrons can enjoy a great night out.

New strategies introduced due to the state government's Valley DSP program include the establishment of a DSP coordinating committee; funding of a chill-out zone supported by NightWatch chaplains; extra police numbers; upgraded installation of additional lighting; improved coordination of public transport, including introduction of gobo projections—that is, light projections on footpaths; installation of LCD monitors by QR to better inform passengers of bus and rail timetables; relocation of secure taxi ranks and bus stops; and improved cleaning of the precinct, to mention just a few.

Three months in and the results already speak for themselves. This is despite the number of factors that have impacted on the results, such as the Queensland floods, Cyclone Yasi and the very busy festive season. The increased police presence is having an impact with police undertaking an additional 3,749 hours of patrol in Fortitude Valley in just three months of operation. In addition, police assisted 162 people to a place of safety or to a designated rest and recovery area, intervened in and prevented conflict on 574 occasions, defused 310 potential incidents through de-escalation and issued 237 move-on directions. Officers also performed 821 street checks, 592 walk throughs of licensed premises and 70 random breath tests. There were 414 arrests undertaken, which included 1,314 liquor offences, 196 good order offences, 27 drug related offences, one drink-driving offence and 15 offences of assault related offences. There have been 45 notices to appear issued and one reveller has been banned from the Fortitude Valley drink-safe precinct for 12 months for common assault and being armed so as to cause fear or alarm. This is evidence that the Bligh government's new banning laws are operational and working.

These results demonstrate that this government is serious about cracking down on the minority of patrons who go out to cause trouble, clearly demonstrating that the DSP trial is helping to do just that. Together with the increased police presence, a two-year DSP trial also includes the establishment of safe zones with the chill-out zone assisting 323 patrons and distributing more than 10,000 cups of water. A

further 336 patrons were assisted by NightWatch chaplains. I want to thank Senior Chaplain Lance Mergard and his team for their dedicated and outstanding services to the Valley area over a long period of time.

Improved and better coordinated public and private transport services resulted in taxis, via secure and staffed taxi ranks, safely transporting 114,300 people home from the Valley DSP, representing more than 56,000 taxi trips. Improved transport information and signage and reallocated bus stops have delivered safer increased patronage with many patrons expressing their appreciation for the improvements. The Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing also conducted 37 compliance operations at 26 licensed venues which detected seven breaches, sending a clear message that all stakeholders must work together to ensure the safety and orderly conduct of all who enjoy what the Valley has to offer. There is an online survey which has been greatly participated in. We are looking forward to the results. I would like to thank all members of the DSP committee, in particular the police force, which is performing an excellent coordinating role. People deserve to feel safe and secure when they go out in Brisbane. The Valley DSP trial is ensuring that this is the case.